Santiago's

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Santiago's

by JJ_Jupiter

Summary

“I’m not gay.”

He says it with such a conviction that Sam would believe him if he hadn’t already seen evidence to the contrary with his own eyes. The fact that Dean is even acknowledging it at all tells Sam all he needs to know. Only Dean could come out by outright denying that he’s gay.

Notes

Dean experiments, gets caught, comes out. The age old story. It's basically just a PWP.
TW - there's one in context usage of a homophobic slur, near the end.

They wait three weeks for Dad to call and when he does it's not the news they were hoping for. Sam takes a break from his SAT reading, feeling a little anxious as he watches Dean's face go from pleased to angry to worried, his fingers absently tying stress knots in the phone's cord while he gives affirmative responses to whatever orders their father is barking out on the other end of the line.

"He's not coming back yet," Sam guesses after Dean hangs up. Dean rests his head in both his hands for a moment, clearly livid. "What are we gonna do?" Sam asks.

Sam knows they're already low on cash. There's slim pickings in this town; the place is pretty much derelict. Area so rough that even at seventeen Sam couldn't be left alone here. It's a forgotten armpit between two quarrelling districts; an industry town that's long since been underfunded and left to waste. They hear distant gunshots most nights. The nearest hospital is twenty miles, no library, not even a church. It takes Sam an hour to get to school if he has to catch the bus.

Their motel room smells faintly of mould. There are roach carcasses under the sink. The lights flicker, the water runs cold after five minutes in the shower and the walls are so thin that Sam knows what kind of porn their neighbour likes.

Twice already he and Dean have had to break up savage catfights outside in the parking lot between rival hookers. The poverty and desperation so sad and ugly that not even Dean could find the stomach to make any jokes about it.

Of course, it's the only motel in town.

There's only one real bar too, *Santiago's,* and Dean's pretty much already tapped it for all he can; the locals are tight-knit and have by now all caught on to his hustle. They're downright nasty about it. Neither Sam or Dean thought they would be sticking around here this long but Sam can't help a mental "I told you so". Maybe Dean shouldn't have been so cocky at the pool table.

"I'll think of something," Dean says, like always. He starts to pace in front of the window and Sam leaves his brother to brainstorm on his own because he has his own problems; a five thousand word essay due in two days in which Sam needs to explain how Martin Luther King Jr.

built an argument to persuade his audience that American involvement in the Vietnam War was unjust. He needs to keep his grades up; his transcripts are his most treasured and protected possession.

Dean picks him up from school the next day and tells him they need to make a stop at the bar on the way back. Sam points out that the place doesn't open until six but Dean shakes his head.

"They got this unlicensed boxing thing going on. I did some asking around. I need to talk to to the owner. Now, he's had me bounced a couple'a times," Dean flashes Sam a proud grin, quickly looking back at the road; the after school traffic they're caught in treacherous, "but he seems cool. Should be there now for afternoon deliveries, they said."

That's it. That's Dean's entire explanation. His entire plan, more words unsaid than said. Sam, luckily, is well versed in Dean-speak. He doesn't like the idea of Dean boxing for cash but he knows they're already running on fumes. Dean wouldn't consider something that might put him out of action like this unless they were desperate.

"Don't worry, Sammy," Dean says with a thump to Sam's arm, more psychic than he even knows, weaving the Impala expertly around the soccer mom vans. "All these dudes are total amateurs. It'll be easy money."

Santiago is younger than Sam was expecting. Sam places him mid-twenties, but he's covered in dark tattoos, spidering from his knuckles up his sleeves, peeking out from his shirt collar, making him look older. Maybe that's the point. He's handsome for a guy, kinda like Dean, big brown eyes and long lashes, strong jaw, but unlike Dean it's obvious he's trying to hide it; two days of stubble growth and his head shaved, silver ring through his nose to draw attention.

Sam sits at the end of the empty bar in the shadows and watches while Dean makes his pitch.

"I can fight," Dean promises, urging. "You know I can. You've seen me fight."

Dean can fight dirty too, it's not like rawheads or chupacabras abide by the Queensbury rules. Dean knows every nasty, painful trick there is to know.

Santiago sighs, contemplating. He rests both his hands on the bar, staring at Dean with a cocked head, open interest, slight amusement.

"I need the money," Dean says quietly, a sudden and odd slip of honesty that has Sam blinking.

"Saint, don't you *dare* let him fight!" the barmaid hisses, tossing a rag down onto the beer tap and placing her fists on her hips sternly. She has "Lydia" stitched into the name patch on her apron, jet black hair with bangs like Bettie Page, winged eyeliner, with the pin-up curves to match. Sam's ears twitch at the nickname, noting the easy familiarity, and he figures she's probably Santiago's girlfriend so he tries not to stare at her but he's always kind of had a thing for goth chicks.

"Look at his face," Lydia continues, gesturing at Dean. "This kid should be in Hollywood getting his dick sucked at The Oscars afterparties, not getting his ass kicked by sweaty three hundred pound savages in your squalid fucking basement."

Santiago snorts. Sam watches Dean's mouth open and close, confused by the compliment, clearly wanting to argue with her, but how can he argue with that? He changes tact.

"Look, I've pissed *all* of those guys off. All their buddies too. People will pay to see me get my ass kicked. I'll be like the main attraction. Plus I'll only ask for say... Fifty percent of takings and bets," Dean says reasonably and that gets a belly laugh from Santiago. His head snaps back, the nautical tattoos on his neck suddenly vibrantly visible, his crowing laugh loud and genuine, the type of laugh you want to join in with.

"He ain't wrong; Bedford's crew would pay top dollar to take a pop at him," Santiago says to Lydia, head jerking in Dean's direction. "Stephen Tyler here took two hundred bucks off Sullivan in a game of pool last Friday night and then knocked the guy's tooth out after." He chuckles again, his grin disappearing quick when Lydia just narrows her eyes at him.

"Hey, I won that game fair 'n square. He hit me first," Dean defends, hands up placatingly. "He was a sore loser."

Santiago smirks again, regarding Dean consideringly, their eye contact

unwavering.

“Twenty percent,” Santiago barters, ignoring Lydia’s sharp unhappy yank on his elbow as she’s called away to sign for a delivery.

“Thirty-five,” Dean counters, face serious.

Santiago sighs again, thoughtful. He leans in closer, elbows on the bar this time to speak more privately and Dean leans in too like he’s done this meeting, had this negotiation, a thousand times. For all Sam knows he might have; this doesn’t seem like it’s the first time and Dean has a natural raw talent for sniffing out the most seedy situations.

“What do you need the money for?” Santiago asks quietly.

“Food and rent,” Dean says flatly.

“You got a record, any warrants out?”

“Not in this state.”

“What’s your real name, Stephen Tyler?”

“Dean Winchester.”

“You’re good with cars, right, Dean Winchester? One of our waitresses told me that you got her truck going with just a Philip's head and a roll of duct tape, drunk off your ass.”

That gives Dean a pause. Sam watches his back straighten a little, not expecting the change of subject but open to it.

“Yeah. Why?”

“Look, man. I *have* seen you fight, and I can probably put you in one, maybe two matches before the locals catch on that you’re a pro and commit a fucking mutiny… Plus, Lydia’s kinda right about your face.” Santiago grins and Sam feels himself frown as Dean absorbs the obvious flirtation, the corner of his mouth twitching in to sly smile as Santiago continues. “If you wanna earn some cash longer term I got a cousin who needs a decent mechanic. Money’s good and it’s regular work but you’d get the call and you’ll need to be there, all night, not back until dawn.”

“They provide all the tools, the space?”

“Everything. All you gotta do is show up where they tell you and strip as many cars as fast and clean as you can.”

Dean glances over to Sam then, rubbing his chin, the conundrum in his conscience clear on his face. It’s the first time since they got here that he’s even acknowledged Sam’s presence. Santiago notices the hesitation; he stands up straight and starts resuming his bar duties, stacking clean glasses methodically.

“Think on it. Come see me in my office after we open tonight and we’ll go over the finer details,” Santiago says, effectively dismissing them.

Sam watches as Dean mulls it over on their drive back to the motel. It’s not like Dean’s never broken the law before but he usually tries to stick with petty crime. Getting mixed up in an organised and prolific grand theft auto scheme is maybe biting off more than he should chew. They can’t afford for him to get arrested; that’s out of the question with Dad off the map and Sam still a minor. But they need cash, fast.

Dean takes the meeting. Santiago keeps them waiting. He’s a busy man.

“You can head back there now,” Lydia tells them just as Dean’s starting to fidget with his long since drained beer bottle, peeling the label off into shreds, never patient for long. She practically sprints around them with a tray full of drinks and disappears into a sea of bodies on the packed dance floor.

Sam’s supposed to wait at the bar but he gives it thirty seconds then slips away, following Dean’s footsteps through a long back hallway, away from the beating pulse of the bass and noise. He stops just outside the office doorway, voices inside mostly audible even with the door closed.

“Here’s a phone, keep it charged and don’t use it for anything else. It’s burner so if you get a message telling you to dump it, do it quick. You’ll get the call and then someone’ll pick you up from Harkney’s diner on 5th Street and drop you back there after. You get paid at the end of the job. It’s cash in hand and your hand only.”

“Got it,” Dean responds curtly.

“How old are you?” Santiago is inquisitive. Sam is starting to think it’s more than just a friendly curiosity.

“Stephen Tyler’s ID says twenty one,” Dean tells him.

“Yeah and what does Dean Winchester’s ID say?”

There’s a loud sigh from Dean. A creak of leather when he shifts, probably making a show of being tired of the cross examination.

“Twenty one,” he says flatly. Honestly.

“So it’s just you and your kid brother, huh?” Santiago asks, and Sam hears the scrape of a chair being pushed back.

“Yup.” Dean is starting to get pissed off with the questions, Sam can tell by his clipped tone. There’s another rustle of clothing, furniture creaking.

“You got a girlfriend, Dean?”

“Christ,” Dean grits out. “That mouth of yours do anything else besides ask a lot of fuckin’ questions.”

“You wanna find out?” Santiago replies in a menacingly low timbre, making Sam strain to hear... Then there’s silence.

Sam holds his breath and listens hard. Nothing. He waits for a minute longer, decides it’s probably about time he headed back to the bar before he gets caught eavesdropping when there’s a dull grunt from inside, followed by a high shriek from a heavy furniture item being bumped or shoved. Sam bites his lip, hand on the doorknob, checking backwards up the dim hallway, wondering whether he should bust in. He has no idea how these things are supposed to go or whether Dean needs his help or not.

Dean can get himself into a lot of trouble in no time at all but he can usually weasel himself out of it just as quick. Maybe he mouthed off to the wrong guy this time. Sam squeezes the doorknob, willing Dean to give him another signal.

There’s more shushing sounds of clothing, the quiet slip of rubber boot soles on concrete, and then a soft, vulnerable sound like someone is in pain and Sam doesn’t hesitate any longer, he swings the door open,

adrenaline flooding him, only to stop dead.

Dean's sitting on the edge of the desk, Santiago standing between his legs, and they're *making out.* Making out like their lives depend on it, aggression in the kiss like it's a violent competition. Sam can't believe it. His eyes drop to Santiago's tattooed knuckles, his hand firmly inside the open fly of Dean's jeans and *rubbing.*

"Shit," Sam breathes, word popping out without him even realising, shocked to his core.

They break apart like they've been electrocuted when they hear him. Dean quickly and guiltily wipes his palm across his mouth. Santiago pulls his hand comically slowly from Dean's jeans, raising a questioning eyebrow at Sam over his shoulder.

"Wait at the fucking bar, Sam," Dean snaps and Sam starts moving, nodding.

"Right, right. Sorry," he stammers, closing the door on himself.

He laughs out loud when he takes his stool again at the bar, a little giddy. Unbelievable. Never in a *million* years would he have thought that *Dean,* of all people, was into *dudes.* There's never been even a hint of indication, in fact, more like the opposite. Sam's seen countless guys hit on Dean over the years in sleazy backwater taverns, motel receptions, gas station bathrooms and each and every time Dean has responded with nothing but outright hostility. If Sam's being honest, he always quietly thought his brother was a tad homophobic.

When Dean re-appears from the back, he walks briskly straight past Sam, pointedly ignoring him. Sam scrambles to catch up, jogging down the steps out front to get to the car before Dean pulls away without him.

The drive is so silent and awkward that Sam can't bear it.

"So how come you never told me you're into -"

Dean turns the radio on fast as lightning, cutting Sam off.

"Dean, come on. It's not a big deal," Sam tries again.

Dean spins the volume up, eyes forward like Sam isn't even there. Like he doesn't even exist.

It isn't until hours later, when the lights are out and they're lying in their beds, six feet away from each other, both wide awake and listening to the steady drip of the leaking showerhead in the bathroom, the rhythmic squeak of someone's mattress springs in one of the rooms the hookers from the second floor are allowed to rent for hourly rates, that Dean finally speaks.

"I'm not gay."

He says it with such a conviction that Sam would believe him if he hadn't already seen evidence to the contrary with his own eyes.

The fact that Dean is even acknowledging it at all tells Sam all he needs to know. Only Dean could *come out* by outright denying that he's gay. Sam smiles to himself in the dark, and then immediately feels bad that Dean feels the need to deny it; wants to tell him that it changes nothing between them. He keeps quiet though, even though he has a lot of questions, knowing Dean will only clam up again if Sam says something he doesn't like right now. It's on the tip of his tongue to tell Dean that the more correct term would be *bisexual,* but. He doesn't want to get punched in the face right now either.

"Just… Don't tell Dad, okay," Dean says, sounding exasperated, clearly giving up on whatever sharing he'd started. Sam feels the words like a punch to the gut, making him immediately and equivocally angry.

"Fuck Dad," Sam starts, propping up on one elbow, "if he can't accept -"

"This isn't some righteous crusade, Sam," Dean interrupts, sitting up too, making mirror images of them. "It's my business. I wanna keep it that way. Just don't tell him… Please?"

"I won't," Sam promises. As if Dean even had to ask. Dean nods, flops back down and Sam waits and waits but that's it. That's the end of the conversation.

Dean gets the first call just after seven on Saturday night. The ringtone is some annoying digital variation of the Spanish Flea and Sam knows

it's gonna be stuck on a loop in his head for days. Dean says nothing after he picks up, just listens, then when the call ends he starts pulling on his boots.

Sam feels a wave of apprehension as Dean leaves, only half listening to the ingrained list of dos and don'ts that Dean rattles off to him like a prayer. He's seventeen; he's heard it all before. He can look after himself. He's been left alone a thousand times. He has a gun and machete. He repeats this manta to himself as he locks the door and fixes the salt lines.

Dean is gone for nearly twelve hours to the minute; slipping back in phantom quiet just after seven in the morning. He empties his pockets on to his nightstand, fingers caked in grease and oil, before he takes off his jacket, disappears to use the bathroom.

Sam fakes sleep, stares at the dirty roll of bills that Dean left behind and wonders how much is there. How much it's costing to silence Dean's integrity so they can keep paying for this room that should be condemned, waiting around in this shit hole city for Dad to get back. He wonders what it costs Dean, not just physically but mentally.

Sam used to sneer at Dean's lack of ambition but more and more as he gets older he understands that there is no boundary Dean won't push in his devotion to their father's mission. There is no task too difficult for Dean to overcome if it keeps their family safe. Lately, with his college applications now looming, Sam has stopped sneering and started appreciating everything Dean does to keep their family fed, watered, alive and together. All the dirty work he does so Sam will never have to.

Hunger and boredom set in around noon. Sam shakes Dean awake and tells him he's gonna walk to the diner and get them some take out. Dean half wakes up, groggily tells him to take the Impala and Sam thinks he must be dreaming. Dean has barely let the car out of his sight since they landed; hyper aware of the local crime rates.

"It's cool, she's off limits now, totally safe," Dean mumbles, only one eye open, reaching out to grab the keys from his side table, chucking them to Sam. "Hey, do we need a PlayStation II? 'Cause my new boss has like forty of those things and we need to make room in the warehouse."

Sam laughs out loud. Of course Dean has sleuthed his way into the inner circle of the local gang kingpins already. Ever the chameleon,

Dean can fit into that type of group and win trust with an alarming ease. Sam would stick out like a sore thumb.

“I think we’re good, man. I have way too much studying to do.”

“Yeah, you’re right. Hey, I’ll be gone again tonight and if I’m not back before you go, just take the car to school on Monday. Saves you taking the bus. Take whatever money you need for gas and for your lunch or whatever.”

He’s back to sleep before his head hits the pillow. Sam has an affectionate urge, a strong overwhelming endearment to his brother in that moment that makes him want to give Dean a hug, or a kiss goodbye. He knows better than to act on it. He orders Dean extra bacon with his breakfast instead.

Dean convinces Santiago (Sam doesn't ask *how* he convinces him) to put him in one fight and just as Dean predicted the money rolls in like a tsunami from his bitter pool-losing rivals hoping to see him get his ass stomped. Dean’s opponent for the evening is six foot three, two hundred and forty pounds of solid hamburger meat, on a six match winning streak. Dean is lucky number seven and the assholes in the bar are already taunting Dean with cut throat gestures, revelling in what they think is his blood in the water, a done deal.

Lydia takes Santiago’s request for two whiskeys and a coke, points the three of them to a quiet table in the corner to count ticket sales and plot a strategy. She leans over the bar to accept a kiss on the lips from Santiago as they go by, her top hanging mind meltingly low and making Sam feel like a pervert for not being able to drag his gaze away.

“Noel Bedford has been confirmed as your dance partner for Sunday. The guy can fight; he used to box in the Army, almost went to the Olympics one year, so don’t get complacent,” Santiago warns them in a hushed tone. “He dislocated his shoulder in a drunk driving accident a couple of years ago so his left is shot now, and he gets tired quick as hell, but that’s not usually a problem since none of his last six fights have gone more than one round.”

Dean purses his lips, nods, sorting small bills from large from the wad of cash in front of him on their table.

“Yeah, I got it,” he says nonchalantly and Santiago snorts, clearly baffled by Dean’s aloof confidence. Sam shakes his head, almost feeling sorry for all these suckers about to lose half their pay checks. Almost. Lambs to the slaughter.

Lydia appears and tosses down three coasters, sets down the whiskey tumblers and then puts a beer down in front of Sam and flips the cap off for him. Santiago rolls his eyes at her from opposite.

“What?” she snaps, challenging. “He looks twenty-one.” She smiles at Sam, her vivacious red lipstick drawing his eyes to her mouth, her sweet cupid's bow. He smiles back, takes a sip of the beer as he watches her walk away.

“You come in to my bar underage, drink my beer for free, and now you’re flirtin’ with my girl, Sam?” Santiago accuses, voice lifting an octave like he’s impressed. Sam smirks around the rim of his bottle and Dean elbows Santiago in his ribs, draws their attention back to him.

“If she wants to fuck any of us, it’s obviously me. Now can we please get back to business here,” he chastises them. Dean pushes a pile of twenty dollar bills to Sam’s side of the table. “Count this,” he instructs.

“Bossy, ” Santiago murmurs under his breath. The stacks of tickets and betting slips in front of him scatter in a gust of air when Dean elbows him in the ribs again, his addicting laugh making heads turn in their direction, drawing curious glances.

There’s a boxing ring in the basement that’s seen better days. A lone bulb swaying above and casting an eerie highlight on the bloodstains on the floor mat. It’s no shirts, no shoes, and taped knuckles. As close to a bare knuckle street brawl as you can get whilst still maintaining basic boxing etiquette.

It’s a full house, regulars and out of towners alike all packed in like sardines, baying for their pound of flesh. In keeping with tradition, the fight doesn’t go past the first round.

Dean has an astonishing right hook. Sam’s heard their father muse about it with fellow hunters, gym coaches, disgruntled cops, confirming Dean has a natural laser-like precision, honed from years of live action practice. Dean was never interested in boxing

professionally; he doesn't like getting hit in the nose ("*What about my modelling career, Sammy?"*), doesn't like sticking to the rules of engagement for too long, but there's no doubt that he fights at a professional level of skill, regardless. They both do.

In tonight's bout, Sam watches from ringside as Dean allows himself to absorb a few heavy jabs to the face from his opponent to get his feet wet, to get himself hurt and get his adrenaline pumping, then he uses that right arm of his like a secret weapon. He cracks Bedford in the jaw with such soaring credence, such confidence in his own delivery, that he turns and walks back to his corner before the guy even hits the deck behind him.

Every now and then, Dean does something so undisputedly goddamn cool that it makes Sam's eyes sting with pride and envy. Not that he would ever admit it.

In the resounding silence there's a moment of pin drop stillness; the entire crowd holding their breath, waiting desperately for the guy to get up, but he doesn't, he's out cold and Dean doesn't look back once.

The stunned referee begins a slow ten count and Dean leans in to the ropes, grins down at Sam and starts biting at the tape on his wrists, getting unwrapped, not needing to wait for anyone to call it. Dean slips his t-shirt back on when the count gets to seven, spreading blood down his face from the open wound above his eye and not caring. He knows the guy ain't getting back up. Job done.

The referee gets to ten, arms waving to signal it's over and the whole room erupts before Sam's eyes as realisation dawns. Bodies flood the ring and Sam moves too, climbing through the ropes to shield his brother from the other side's infuriated cornermen taking swipes at him. Santiago steps into the middle, brings in some other guys who work for him to start keeping the scrimmage at bay.

"You cheating Mexican asshole piece of shit," one of Bedford's men rages, his finger stabbing into Santiago's chest once, twice, three times. Sam plants his feet, the testosterone fuelled energy in the air getting him keyed up. He can feel Dean at his back, trapped in his corner but bouncing slightly, raring to go again, still in attack mode.

Santiago laughs, an ominous chime amongst the chaos, stands his ground like it's just another day at the office.

"You fucking inbred redneck," he chuckles, jutting his chin in a signal to his bouncers. "I'm Portuguese-American," he corrects as the furious

guy is forcibly lifted into the air by two security. He turns back towards Sam as another multi-body pile up breaks out behind him. Unphased, he reaches over Sam's shoulder to grab Dean's chin, scrutinises the cut over his brother's brow for a few seconds in the low light until Dean shakes him off.

"Lydia, take him upstairs and clean him up, would ya? See if that needs stitches."

"I'm fine," Dean insists. "We can hang around. Looks like the natives are getting restless down here."

"This ain't my first rodeo, amigo. You did your part, I'll do mine. Go with Lydia, both of you." Santiago gestures to the exit and Lydia corrals both Sam and Dean out of the ring and through the crowd masterfully. She leads them up through the empty bar and down the long hallway that Sam remembers. They go past the office this time and to another set of stairs and up there, into an open plan apartment. It's a nice place, Sam notes; soft, warm lighting and modern furnishings. Clearly loved.

"Take a seat at the kitchen counter," Lydia instructs, dropping her keys on the side table. "I'll get the first aid kit."

"I'm fine," Dean calls after her even as he sits down exactly as ordered. "It's just a scratch."

Santiago joins them after a short while, nodding when Dean asks him if everything's okay. He sits down heavily on the couch, pulls envelopes of cash from his inside jacket pockets and lines them up side by side on the coffee table.

"Bedford's awake. He can't remember even getting here tonight. His guy said you got lucky; said they want a re-match… Said he'll *kill you* next time," Santiago tells them, shaking his head in disbelief, morbidly amused.

"No re-match," Lydia snaps before Dean can accept the invitation, glaring at him. "That fool needs a hospital. I thought he was dead when you knocked him out. My whole fucking life flashed before my eyes during that ten second count."

Santiago raises a brow at her dramatics, grins over at Sam while her back is still turned and his audacious, confident smile reminds Sam of

Dean for a split second. His breezy laughter totally infectious. Sam can understand why Dean's into him.

Once all the dried blood is gone, Dean's cut isn't much more than a scratch, like he said. Lydia tries to put a Band-Aid on it and Dean's patience runs out; he stands up quickly, almost knocking her over, says he wants to take a shower.

"Come with me, I'll show you where we keep the towels," Santiago says suggestively and Dean stalks him down the hall, turning back briefly to point a deadly finger at Lydia and Sam.

"Don't give him too much to drink," he warns her. "It's a school night."

Lydia opens the freezer and pulls out a frosty bottle of tequila, takes a lime from the bowl of fruit on the counter top and then she turns to Sam, starting to smirk. She pours them both a shot carefully and Sam holds his tiny glass to hers as she makes a toast.

"To dumb fucking rednecks," she declares, and tosses the tequila back with no hesitation. Sam copies, the sour golden liquid burning his taste buds, the wedge of lime that follows making his eyes water.

"You're more than welcome to stay," Lydia says, starting to expertly slice the rest of the lime. Sam's not sure whether to be scared or turned on at how quick and careless she is with the knife, barely even looking as she cuts and talks at the same time.

"Those two are definitely gonna just be in the bedroom for a while. I don't know about Dean, but Santiago always gets kind of wired after a brawl. They probably have some left over aggression to take out on each other."

Sam's mind flashes back to their kiss that he saw, the pained crease in Dean's forehead, his fingertips turned white from holding on so tightly, and yeah. He doesn't need to hang around to see or hear any more of that, and Dean definitely wouldn't want him to. Besides, Dean's right, it's a school night.

Lydia pouts but calls him a cab, tells him she'll make sure Dean's home early to get him to school on time. Her kiss on his cheek leaves a perfect Hollywood lipstick print that he doesn't notice until he's brushing his teeth later in front of the cracked motel bathroom mirror.

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Dean leans against the sink as Santiago reaches into the walk-in cubicle and turns the shower on. He pulls his stained, sweaty t-shirt over his head and waits. He's horny. Unspent energy thrumming along his nerves and skin making him prickle with goose bumps. He feels his dick fattening in his jeans as Santiago turns to look at him.

Dean watches, radiating with impatience, as Santiago unbuttons his own shirt slowly, gold rosary beads hanging starkly against the blue-black ink on his chest giving Dean a strange sense of comfort; the symbol synonymous with safety, in his mind. The guy's sorta built, like maybe he used to fight himself. Dean imagines them sparring, wondering if Santiago could pin him. He kinda wants to find out.

"Get in," Santiago tells him, nodding to the shower, steam clouds starting to fill the small room. The sound of his voice goes straight to Dean's dick again; the anticipation for what's about to happen giving him butterflies as he reaches for his zipper.

The hot blast feels incredible; Dean lets his head hang, the water pressure massaging the back of his neck steadily, feels Santiago slip into the cubicle behind him and shut the door, taking up all the space. There's not enough room for two six foot guys; they're instantly squashed together chest to back, hot bare skin touching everywhere and making Dean vibrate a little. Santiago's hands are hesitant at first, like he's letting Dean get used to it. He digs his thumbs into Dean's tense traps, a quick massage before they glide soap slick around Dean's ribs, one settling on his stomach and the other easing lower.

There's a hot kiss to the juncture of Dean's neck and shoulder that sends tingles down his spine. It turns into a nip with teeth when Santiago finally gets Dean's cock in his hand, both of them feeling it grow, getting painfully hard just from the touch.

He starts a languid and deliberately agonising stroke, pulls Dean's body back against his, lets his own dick press against Dean's ass.

"You done this before?" Santiago whispers, his lips brushing the sensitive shell of Dean's ear and Dean feels a jolt low in his belly. He's sure as hell never showered with another grown adult dude. With guys, it's been mostly just heavy petting; sloppy make outs and awkward but thrilling hand jobs in back rooms or front seats. He wants to do more, turned on by the fantasy of it. He's just never had the time or come across the right guy. Until now.

"Not really," Dean admits, pushing his cock harder into the cradle of

Santiago's curled fingers, urging him to move faster. Santiago's other hand creeps down to grab his balls, gives them a gentle tug before he pushes his fingers further, behind, in-between, and Dean widens his stance, goes on to the balls of his feet to give more room for those fingertips to explore him, knowing it probably makes him look like a total slut but feeling no shame over it.

Santiago makes a soft sound, approving, running a firm insisting fingertip over Dean's taint again and again, speeds up his pace a little on Dean's cock.

"You want me to fuck you?" Santiago asks, words sending a bolt through Dean's nervous system. His face heats up ridiculously, knowing he's gonna have to say it out loud. He feels his cock throb in Santiago's palm, already close.

"Yeah," Dean breathes, struggling to keep his voice from breaking, forehead sliding against the tiled wall as he nods. He takes a breath, more turned on than he can ever remember being in his life, recognising the feeling of fear pumping adrenaline through him too, making his pulse spike. "Yeah. I want you to fuck me."

Santiago speeds up the tempo again on his cock, squeezing hard, just right, and Dean feels his knees start to buckle a little, his orgasm teetering dangerously.

"I am gonna fuck you, later, *tesudo*. You feel my cock, right here," Santiago murmurs against Dean's ear, pushing again against Dean's ass to emphasise his point. "It's gonna hurt. You're gonna take it like a man for me, right?"

Dean feels himself nodding, already imagining it; the stretch and burn, being bent over and just *taking* it. He comes with a full body shudder, Santiago's firm hand stroking him through it, his firm body the only thing keeping both of them upright while Dean pants against the wall, wrung out.

As he follows Santiago through the bedroom doorway a flying bra hits him in the chest. Lydia rolls off the king size bed in the centre of the room, prowls towards him in just her red panties and he feels a little lightheaded for a second, his blood starting to course again with excitement.

“You guys better have another round in you,” she demands, arms looping around Dean's neck, going up onto her toes and letting him take her weight. Her kiss tastes like tequila and salt, her tongue bitter against his and her cushiony tits squashing against his chest. Dean one hundred percent has another round in him.

Santiago comes up behind her and they sandwich her in, dwarf her between them.

“I want both of you to fuck me,” she breathes, tipping her head back to rest against Santiago’s collar bone. Dean's imagination instantly supplies an example for him; the feeling of sliding into her slick fucked open heat where Santiago’s cock has been too, and it makes him groan.

“At the same time,” she adds, looking right at him, pupils dilated, hazy with lust.

“Jesus,” he hears Santiago mutter, his face nuzzled in under her jaw. “Lydia, are you sure?” he asks her, pulling back, his eyes meeting Dean’s over her head, his hands ghosting down to thumb her nipples.

Lydia undoes the loose knot keeping the towel around Dean’s waist and kicks it away when it pools on the floor. She looks down at his body, his dick, and bites her lip, her white teeth cutting into the deep red.

“God, yes,” she moans, wanton, steering all three of them towards the bed. “Saint, get the lube, baby,” she insists and Santiago kisses her on the temple, leaves her to pull Dean down on top of her. She locks her legs around his hips, grinds up against his dick, wasting no time, sliding her soft naked skin along his like a cat in heat.

Dean kisses her back in a daze, a half dream state as his mind races to catch up with his physical reactions. This *might be* the best night of his life.

They roll and slot together in a tumble of hands and tongues in constant motion. There’s a technical aspect to it that makes Dean glad that ends up on the bottom of the ménage à trois totem pole. He lies on his back and tries to keep still, jaw clenched to keep a lid on his desperate urge to shove further inside her as Lydia squirms on his dick, the molten core of her body undulating around him and her tiny moans and feathery breaths tickling his ear as Santiago works his way all the way inside too, into her ass.

Lydia moans and Dean strokes a comforting hand down her tense back at the same time he feels the shape of Santiago's cock brush against his inside her. Outside, the gentle slap of Santiago's balls against his own. It feels alien. Surreal.

Amazing.

Santiago controls the pace, controls the see-sawing rock of Lydia's pelvis and they all make bitten off groans as he starts to move with purpose, drowning out the wet sucking sounds of the lube and other fluids coursing between them.

Dean blinks the sweat out of eyes, focuses on Lydia's blood-red fingernails as she slides a serpent like hand down her own body and starts making ragged circles on her pink clit. He feels her thighs trembling, her muscles inside tugging and struggling, tightening, and then she's screaming as she comes and Dean almost goes with her, the lava hot contractions around him, the wet drag of Santiago's cock pushing steadily against his through her inner walls as he keeps fucking her, *fucking them*, through it.

Dean grabs the base of his own dick and squeezes hard, the visual of Lydia writhing and crying out, euphoric, above him burned into his retinas and eardrums forever. He can feel his own pulse everywhere, his body screaming for his own release but he pushes it back, frankly shocked at his own self restraint. Lydia's orgasm seems to go on for a full minute, until it looks more agony than ecstasy, until her sobbing breaths become laboured and she goes limp between them.

Santiago pulls out first, cautiously like they're a human game of Jenga, then heads towards the bathroom. Lydia turns to putty on top of Dean as soon as it happens and Dean eases her down, rolling them both to one side and disentangling gently. He pushes her hair back off her reddened face, checking for life, and she smiles at him sleepily, lipstick smudged in an almost artistically debauched way.

She snuggles into her pillow, heavy eyelids already closing. She looks completely fucking wrecked and Dean grins at her before she nods off, kind of proud that she just took two cocks at the same time and still managed to bounce around like a goddamn porn star.

"Your girl is somethin' else," Dean points out as Santiago comes back, the thin lines of scratches down his chest from Lydia's sharp fingernails stinging as sweat starts to dry. Santiago nods, agreeing, rummaging through the bedside drawer near Dean's head, pulling out

another tube of lube, another condom.

"She's fuckin' crazy," Santiago says fondly, like it's the highest compliment. "She's been wanting to try that, but... We've never been able to agree on a guy before." He climbs back on to the bed, moves back between Dean's legs and reaches down to roll off Dean's condom. It's a strange sensation, having one taken *off* while he's still hard but he guesses he doesn't need it anymore, not for this part.

"What should I do?" Dean asks, his voice rasping a little, his hands sweeping out nervously across the bed looking for a job to do.

"Nothing, man. Just lie there and look pretty. I'll do the rest," Santiago says softly, his hot palm sliding up the outside of Dean's thigh, giving his quads a reassuring squeeze.

I can do that, Dean thinks to himself easily, breathing through his nose, willing his body to relax as Santiago pushes his knees back, folding him. Dean feels a lube slick knuckle making circles around his hole, and then one finger glides in steadily. He blinks at the ceiling, getting used to it. Santiago pumps it a few times, watching Dean intently, and then introduces another finger and Dean's surprised at his own body's resistance but he's had worse, he'd prepared himself with the expectation that it was gonna hurt. He can deal with it.

"How's that feel?" Santiago breathes, his slippery fingers corkscrewing on the inward stroke, intermittently touching something that makes Dean's cock jerk where it's resting against his belly. It doesn't catch every time but it feels good enough on the times that it does that Dean wants to keep going, wants to keep chasing for that feeling. He chews his lip, weirdly overwhelmed between the painful stretch and fleeting pleasure.

"Feels kinda gay," Dean grits out and Santiago laughs, surprised, slows down a fraction. He leans between Dean's knees, leans all the down so they're breathing the same air.

"This isn't gay," he says wisely, fondly laving Dean's swollen lower lip with a wet kiss. "The next part, when I fuck you… That's the gay part."

Santiago leaves a hot trail of kisses over his jaw before he leans back and Dean's pleasure spreads back over him in a wave. He got so close with Lydia and stopped, felt the urgency recede like a tide going out; now it creeps back. Dean *needs* to know what it feels like to be fucked, feels his cock pulse again at the thought, longing for attention, and he reaches down to grab it.

"Let's get to that part already," Dean demands, catching Santiago's eye, feeling his hesitation even as his fingers keep moving in a measured rhythm, in and out. “C’mon,” Dean urges, feeling what he knows is a crimson colour clouding over his face, fully aware that he's close to begging.

There’s a mortifying moment where nothing happens, where Santiago stops moving and just stares at him. Dean holds his breath, unable to read the expression, but then he hears Santiago whisper what he thinks is a Portuguese curse, feels him leaning over, his warmth blanketing Dean as he reaches for the condom on the nightstand.

There’s a light touch, spreading more lube, which is oddly cool and kinda nice, and then he feels the head of Santiago’s cock pressing against him. He has a few seconds to remember to breathe again, to try to school himself not to tense up, before the pressure becomes borderline unbearable. The feeling of being breached pushes the air out of his lungs; he hears himself gasp involuntarily and Santiago freezes between his legs. There’s a searching hand along Dean’s flank, trying to soothe.

“It’ll get better if we do this part quick but I don’t wanna hurt you -” Santiago starts.

“Just do it,” Dean grunts. He wants to get to the better part, like as soon as humanly possible. Santiago does as asked; Dean feels strong palms cup around his thighs, feels a more insisting, solid push, and then a stinging, sinking fullness he didn’t think was possible.

Santiago pulls back, still going slow but with a surety this time, and then pushes back in, deeper, and Dean’s eyes squeeze shut. The next pass is marginally easier, and then the next. A molasses rhythm begins and Dean’s desire swims back in to focus as he realises they’re actually, *finally,* having sex. The lingering pain starts to pool hotly, starts to become secondary.

Santiago sets a restrained pace and Dean feels a shift, then there’s a hand on his cock again, Santiago’s fingers slick with skin-warmed lube; a frisson of heat travels through him as the palm wrapped around him starts a controlled back and forth in time with the thrusts.

He opens his eyes and Santiago's watching him, intense eye contact, a kind of worship that has Dean blushing again and then there's another shift, a slight change in the angle, a harder thrust into him that makes

him grit his teeth at first and then… Then he feels it. An intense throb inside him as Santiago's cock shoves against that place on his instroke, that hidden treasure, and Dean's breath leaves him again but for a different reason.

"Yeah?" Santiago asks him, knowing, electricity snapping between them, his voice sounding strained like he's starting to finally come unravelled.

Dean nods, unable to speak as it happens again, that same burst of heavenly sensation washing out everything else.

"*Fuck* ," Santiago hisses, and picks up the cadence with his hips. "Fuck... Dean, you. You look *so*…" His words die as he keeps fucking, and Dean's cock lurches in Santiago's hand, spurting pre-come. Santiago's moans at that, his self discipline starting to shatter, his movements becoming more powerful. Dean feels it too, a fast, desperate race as their bodies slap together, as Santiago's fist blurs over Dean's cock, his grip aggressive, a perfect all encompassing, twisting friction.

The tide of Dean's orgasm floods back, building and building until his body goes slack under Santiago's unyielding pounding. Santiago's body goes taut in contrast, muscles bunching and Dean feels it when Santiago comes, buried inside him balls deep. It's the last thing he can handle, his own come sputtering across his chest half a beat after, his orgasm rapturous, ripping out of him and taking what feels like his soul with it, stopping time.

Santiago disengages with a practised ease, keeping the discomfort to a minimum. He collapses on his back next to Dean, their sticky biceps sealed together, and doesn't have the manual dexterity to even tie off the condom; he just lets it drop on to one of their damp towels still on the floor from earlier, staring at the ceiling like it holds all the answers to every question in the universe.

Dean watches Santiago's side profile wonderingly, blinking at how gorgeous he looks. He watches his chest rise and fall, watches as his breathing slows back to baseline, both of them in a stupefied, companionable silence.

"Dude," Dean whispers eventually, still stunned. "Holy shit."

Santiago laughs, his breath bubbling out of him. He turns his head so

they're eye to eye, his gaze darting all over Dean's face.

"That was so fucking hot… Maybe next time, we can switch it up?" Santiago poses. "Kinda curious to see if you can give it as good as you take it."

Hell yes, Dean thinks, his grin immovable even as his eyes start to close themselves.

*

Sam's rudely awoken an hour before his alarm is due to go off on Monday morning by a startling banging on their motel room door. He's halfway out of bed, cursing Dean out loud for forgetting his key, when he hears his father's voice.

"Boys, it's me. Open up," John calls out and Sam swings the door open, amazed.

"What are you doing here? Dean said you were gonna need another four weeks at least."

John steps over the threshold, closes the door behind himself. He looks spooked, a little pale.

"Job went south. We need to get out of the state. Today," he says, surveying their room. It's kind of a pigsty. "Where's your brother?" John asks with an accusatory tone.

"There's this bar he's been working at. He should be back soon, he always gets back in time to take me to school," Sam explains quickly, the lies tripping off his tongue so naturally that he worries himself.

"Pack his stuff too, we'll meet him there," John grunts, starting to pick up their things. Sam nods, reaches for their empty duffels.

*

Dean wakes up to the smell of coffee and the faint strum of Jimmy Hendricks playing two rooms away, he rolls on to his back on the soft mattress, finds the bed empty. He hurts in places he didn't even know existed before last night, can feel bite marks and nail gouges pulling as he stretches. He smirks to himself proudly.

“Lydia’s in the shower but she said I had to wake you up soon so you could make sure Sam gets to school,” Santiago says from across the room, in his boxers, pulling clothes out of his closet. He brings a white t-shirt over and thwaps it across Dean’s pillow.

“Wear this. Yours was covered in blood so I tossed it,” he shrugs.

“Thanks,” Dean says, stretching his arms out over his head, distracted by Santiago’s mouth. His lips are swollen, bitten, from everything they got up to last night and Dean wonders if this is what people see when they gaze absently at his own mouth; whether they feel a strong urge to suck on his full bottom lip, whether they want to fuck his soft mouth the way he wants to fuck Santiago’s right now.

Santiago grins at him knowingly.

“See something you like, belo?” he purrs, dropping his body on top of Dean, grinding his hips down, planting burning kisses down Dean’s neck. The weight on him feels good, the rough bump of their heads, the burn of stubble over his collar bone making his skin crawl with need.

When Santiago starts to suck his dick, Dean watches for as long as he can. The velvet heat is incredible and Santiago just takes it, moans when the head of Dean’s cock bumps and slides at the back of his throat, works his tongue relentlessly as he lets Dean thrust messily, sloppy and greedy for every inch.

Santiago begins a confident, determined bobbing motion, the silky vacuum against his foreskin finally making Dean have to squeeze his eyes shut, overwhelmed with the visual and sensation at once. He feels his orgasm building and, as if he knows, Santiago starts moving faster, lets Dean’s cock glance deeper with each pass. He runs a finger behind Dean’s balls, gently circles it around the delicate ridges, where Dean’s still sensitive, sore, and just being touched there again makes his whole body jerk.

“Fuck,” Dean starts, going rigid everywhere. “I’m - I’m gonna come,” he warns.

Santiago presses his finger tip against the tight pressure of Dean’s hole, pushes his finger inside and crooks it perfectly, hums around Dean’s cock like he’s hungry for it, his throat tightening.

When Dean comes, he feels the breath leave his body, feels sparks dance inside his abdomen. He looks down and locks eyes with

Santiago who swallows every last drop, eyelashes fluttering and throat working gently.

Dean watches with a mesmerised fascination as Santiago kneels up, starts jerking himself off furiously. For a moment Dean thinks maybe Santiago is gonna fuck him (again) so he bends his knees up to accommodate, but that must be enough, because there's a groan, a splash of wet heat across his belly that he recognises before Santiago tumbles back down on top of him again, both of them breathing like they just finished a marathon.

Dean tingles with the aftershocks of his orgasm. He grips the back of Santiago's neck and just holds on for a second, trying to keep the connection for a little longer. He eyes the still steaming mug of black coffee on the nightstand, thinks he could get used to waking up like this.

By the time Lydia wanders in yelling that the bathroom's free they're still there in a fucked out, jizz soaked heap. She frowns at them, not even trying to hide her jealousy.

*

The Impala is the only car left in the lot outside of Santiago's, sparkling with dawn dew and parked perfectly in line with the front entrance, waiting for Dean like his loyal steed. John parks his truck at the back of the lot, kills the engine.

Sam sits uncomfortably in the passenger seat and feels his heart rate start to pick up as Dean emerges, perfectly timed, from the chillingly quiet bar doors with both Lydia and Santiago on his heels. The place looks different in the light of day; has a morbid stillness that makes Sam feel uneasy. Santiago is barefoot, jeans but no top; it looks like Lydia is wearing his shirt.

Sam glances at his father in the driver's seat, takes in his stern brow and narrow eyes, watching things unfold from their clandestine vantage point and he feels like he should give Dean some kind of warning; like maybe he should reach across and honk the horn to let him know they're there.

Lydia stretches up on to her tiptoes and wraps Dean in a hug, kisses him firmly on the lips and the kiss lasts long enough that John clucks his tongue, exasperated, his impatience palpable. Then the

unthinkable happens before Sam has time to do anything. As Dean breaks away from Lydia, Santiago reaches out and grabs the side of his neck, pulling Dean in for his own goodbye kiss and Dean, unaware of his audience, goes willingly.

“What in the hell?” John asks, disbelieving, and Sam cringes, helpless. They both just stare as Dean lets himself be manhandled a little in an obviously passionate exchange; Santiago’s hands dipping into Dean’s back pockets to keep their bodies pressed close, their foreheads resting against one another’s for an intimate moment when their kiss ends, while parting words are exchanged, before Dean turns and starts to descend the steps.

Dean makes it all the way to his driver’s side door before he spots them and Sam sees the exact moment that realisation dawns on his brother, the way his entire demeanour changes, stiffens, snaps to attention.

John winds down his window as Dean approaches the truck.

“Hey, you’re back early -” he starts.

“Sam packed your gear. I don’t have time for questions; we gotta go. Now,” John tells him in a tone that doesn’t broker an argument. Not that Dean would ever usually argue.

Dean nods, eyes flicking to Sam. He starts backing away from the window.

“Okay. I’ll follow you,” Dean agrees simply and Sam pulls his door handle, finally able to move again.

“I’ll ride with Dean,” he says, not looking back as he hops out.

Sam doesn’t think it’s possible to tell a person’s mood from how they’re driving, but somehow he can tell with their father. He drives *angry*. Dean doesn’t try to keep up, more cautious than usual, leaving a four car gap between them that’s definitely deliberate.

“How long were you guys waiting out there?” Dean asks. Sam knows what he’s *really* asking, his fingers drumming out of time on the steering wheel and giving away his nervousness.

“We’d just pulled up, but. It was long enough,” Sam says and Dean blows out a defeated breath. “I’m sorry, man,” Sam adds, because he is.

Dean just shrugs, his expression closed off.

They drive for four and a half hours before Dad’s truck pulls over into a rest stop. Dean glides their car into the parking space next to him and Dad tells them he needs to make a couple of calls and that he’ll meet them inside the diner.

“Have you always known?” Sam broaches cautiously after the waitress drops their plates in front of them. Dean (always having time to flirt no matter what) had given her his signature smile and wink and she had eaten it up, topping up his coffee mug with one hand and twirling a strand of her hair with the other, crushing hard. She’s easily old enough to be their mother but Dean has a certain appreciation for a woman with experience, as he’s reminded Sam plenty of times. Sam has to wonder how much of Dean’s dogged flirting is genuine attraction and how much is just hard-ingrained habit that he does on total auto-pilot.

“Kind of,” Dean hesitates. He shoves a handful of fries into his mouth, reaching for the ketchup. “It’s hard to explain, Sammy.”

“How come you get so mad when guys hit on you but you lap it up when a girl does it?”

Dean raises an eyebrow at him like he’s an idiot.

“You’re really asking me why I get pissed when sleazy, lonely, bald guys twice my age proposition me in truck stop bathrooms by telling me I got a mouth that’s made for sucking cock? I’m supposed to take that as a compliment?” Dean asks him seriously. “Do you know what I’d do if somebody talked to you like that? What would you say to a chick in that same situation?”

Sam thinks about it for a second and has to concede.

“Yeah, okay. I’d tell her to use pepper spray on those assholes,” he says.

“I rest my case,” Dean says. He picks up his burger but stops with it halfway to his mouth to tack on something else, his case clearly not

rested. “You know how many times growing up some guy’s told me that I’m pretty like a girl or that I *just look like* a faggot? One time, I was maybe fifteen, and this asshole at a pawn shop offered me a hundred bucks for a blowjob, in broad daylight, *in front* of Dad? He reached out and tried to grab my dick like it was a done deal.”

“Bet that went down well,” Sam says, wincing at the thought of what probably happened to the guy after making such a costly mistake, in front of their father no less.

“Yeah,” Dean grunts, not needing to elaborate on that. “Dad made me shave my hair off, after that. That’s why I kept it so short for years.” He takes a gargantuan bite that keeps him busy chewing for a while, shaking his head absently at the memory. Sam feels his long running resentment for their father’s stellar parenting start to bubble under his surface. Of course he would make Dean feel like it was his own fault that pervs were hitting on him, for the crime of being a good looking kid.

Dean doesn’t seem to hold any grudge. He eats his burger thoughtfully, starts thinking out loud again.

“You know. When a chick wants you? She laughs at your lame jokes, flutters her eyelashes, wears a tight outfit. They aren’t usually pushy about it. They want to make you want them back… But when a *guy* wants you? I don’t know, man. I just like to be the one who does the deciding. Especially in the places we hang out. The crusty guys we usually mix it up with aren’t exactly winning GQ man of the year anytime soon.”

Sam grinds black pepper on to his omelette, listens closely because he knows Dean will never have this discussion with him again. Sam’s had sex exactly twice with a girl and as much as he hates to admit it, he’s lived vicariously, learned, *benefited* from Dean’s oversharing and openness about sex for a lot of years. Although they approach things very differently, Sam has to admit that Dean has never steered him wrong when it comes to the birds and the bees. Sam needs the conversation more than Dean does.

“Look, I’m not into dudes *generally* . Just once in a while. You think it’s a big *thing* right now ‘cause you just found out, but this probably won’t even happen again,” Dean says with a finality that Sam believes, even as he’s focused more on his lunch now than anything else. “Besides, I fucked Lydia too last night,” Dean adds with a floaty sigh, his eyes lighting up and glazing over a little at the memory. “If you

ever get the chance to have a threesome, Sammy, you take it," Dean tells him sagely.

"So what, you're like, seventy-thirty?" Sam asks, absolutely not willing to show or admit his jealousy in any way. Dean holds up a hand, mimics a balancing motion.

"More like eighty-twenty."

"And guys like Santiago, that's your 'type'?"

"What?" Dean squints over at him like he's grown a second head.

"You know, he had a kinda bad boy, kinda dangerous vibe. GQ model handsome, the tattoos -"

"Dude," Dean scoffs, "are we sure *I'm* the gay one here? Shut up and eat your eggs."

Sam smirks, but he shuts up, knowing without a shadow of a doubt that he's right. Dean's type is basically himself. Sam saves that titbit and also the fact that Dean's clearly wearing Santiago's t-shirt to tease his brother with at a later date. Golden nuggets of ammunition.

*

"What happened to your eye?" Dad asks when he sits down. He elbows out of his jacket, eyeballing Dean hard from the other side of the booth.

"It's nothing, just a scratch," Dean waves off.

"I asked what happened," Dad repeats and Dean feels his molars clench at the tone. He's twenty one, not five. He takes a second to rearrange his attitude before he answers otherwise none of them are gonna make it out of this diner alive.

"Bar fight," he says, a half truth, knowing that 'I walked into a door' ain't gonna fly.

"In that bar we collected you from this morning?" Dad asks, ignoring their waitress as she fills up a mug of coffee for him. Dean catches her eye, hoping the tight smile he shoots her will let her know that they aren't all assholes at this table. Dean knows Dad's leading up to something; he nods, waiting to be snared in the inevitable trap.

“Been spending a lot of time there while I’ve been gone, huh? When you’re supposed to be looking out for your brother?” Dad asks, voice callous.

Dean feels his lips purse, has to clamp down on the urge to roll his eyes, mouth filling with a thousand smart ass remarks. He feels Sam bristle too, and decides to answer before Sam has a chance to make things even worse.

“You told me you were gonna be gone for a while and I had to figure it out and make some cash, so I took a job,” Dean explains, trying to keep his voice neutral.

“Oh, a job? Is that what you’re calling it?” Dad scoffs. “What the hell was that this morning, Dean?” The words are biting. Dean feels his neck and cheeks heat up and hates it. He knows where Dad’s mind is headed; he’d probably rather believe Dean fucked a guy for money than have Dean admit that fucked a guy for fun.

Dean pulls out the thick envelope that’s been wedged in his pocket, lets it slap down on the formica between the three of them. There’s a grand in twenties, a fat pile. There’s another twelve hundred rolled up in his shaving kit too, but Dad doesn't need to know about that.

“You got me. The fight was for money, and I won by the way... But the sex? That was one hundred percent voluntary.” Dean plasters on a fake smile, edging out of the booth. “I’m gonna gas up the car,” he says, excusing himself whether Dad likes it or not.

*

Sam sees Dad pick up the envelope and fan his thumb over the bills inside.

“Did you know?” Dad asks as they both watch Dean walk away. He saunters up to the counter cowboy smooth, grins a charming goodbye to their waitress, kissing the back of her hand like he doesn’t have a care in the world before he steps out the door.

Sam shakes his head and wonders why he was even shocked at first to find out that Dean was bi. Of course he is. The guy would probably sleep with a mailbox if it looked at him the right way.

“About the fight?” Sam asks cautiously.

“The other thing,” Dad says, his eyes going to Sam’s face to scan whether he tells the truth or not.

“I found out pretty recently,” Sam says, choosing his words carefully. “Dean made me promise not to tell you. Guess he thought you’d have a problem with it.”

A flash of honest to god *hurt* flashes over Dad’s expression and Sam’s emotions mix immediately, unprepared for actual pain as a reaction. His moral anger subsides instantly into a quiet guilt.

“I don’t care who he sleeps with. I just want him to be careful;” Dad says tiredly, slipping two bills out of the envelope to cover the cheque as well as a generous tip. “Both of you.”

Sam nods, accepting that maybe he assumed wrong on this one. He drains the last of his orange juice, trying to pack in as much Vitamin C as possible while he can.

"Maybe you should let Dean know that, too," Sam suggests diplomatically.

*

Dean leans against the sun-baked side of the car as he waits for the tank to fill. He can see Sam and Dad as blurry shapes through the steamed diner window. They don’t look like they're talking, which means they aren’t talking about him, which is a relief. He traces the blocky edge of the burner phone in his pocket and makes a split second decision while he still has a few minutes of privacy.

“Yo, Santiago’s.”

“Hey,” Dean says, stomach churning. He regrets making the call instantly, everything he thought he wanted to say stuck in his throat. “It’s Dean… Winchester.”

“Winchester, what’s up, man? I’m glad you called. I had a chance to look over the takings properly this afternoon and I owe you more money. I stiffed you like a hundred bucks,” Santiago tells him, his voice full of easy mirth. Dean sees the grin in his mind’s eye and wishes bitterly that they’d fucked around more while they had the

chance.

“I always knew you were a fucking scammer, Guerreiro,” Dean says and Santiago’s laugh bellows down the line. “Listen man. I’m calling because… We had kind of a family emergency. We had to split this morning, me and Sam. Left town. I don’t know whether we’ll be coming back that way…”

Santiago says nothing so Dean keeps talking to fill the awkward silence.

“So I just wanted to let you know. And say thanks, for helping me out. Will you let your cousin know, thank him for me too?”

“Sure I will,” Santiago murmurs, voice soft, thoughtful. “Hey, I hope you guys are alright. That’s a shame, man. We were just getting to know each other.”

Dean bites the fleshy inside of his cheek, feels his face twist.

“I’ll just keep this money for you, okay? It’s yours and you never know when you might need a hundred bucks. It’s in an envelope in my desk, marked Stephen Tyler. So if you drop by some time and I’m not here, one of the staff’ll get it for you.”

“Thanks,” Dean croaks, wishing he was better with words, not knowing how to say what he wants to say without sounding like a goddamn Hallmark movie.

“Shit. Lydia is gonna be pissed. She was hoping you’d stick around and get her pregnant,” Santiago says with a smirk that’s audible in his voice and Dean laughs out loud, relieved and grateful for the humour. “Seriously, I know you gotta do whatever you gotta do, but don’t be a stranger okay. If you’re ever passing through this way again…”

“You got it,” Dean promises, hoping he can mean it.

He switches the phone off afterwards and throws it in the rest stop dumpster outside the men’s room. Then he waits in the car patiently, silently, ready for the pending set of directions from Dad to their next destination.

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